

THE IDEAL
OF
CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

DELANY

BV

825

D4



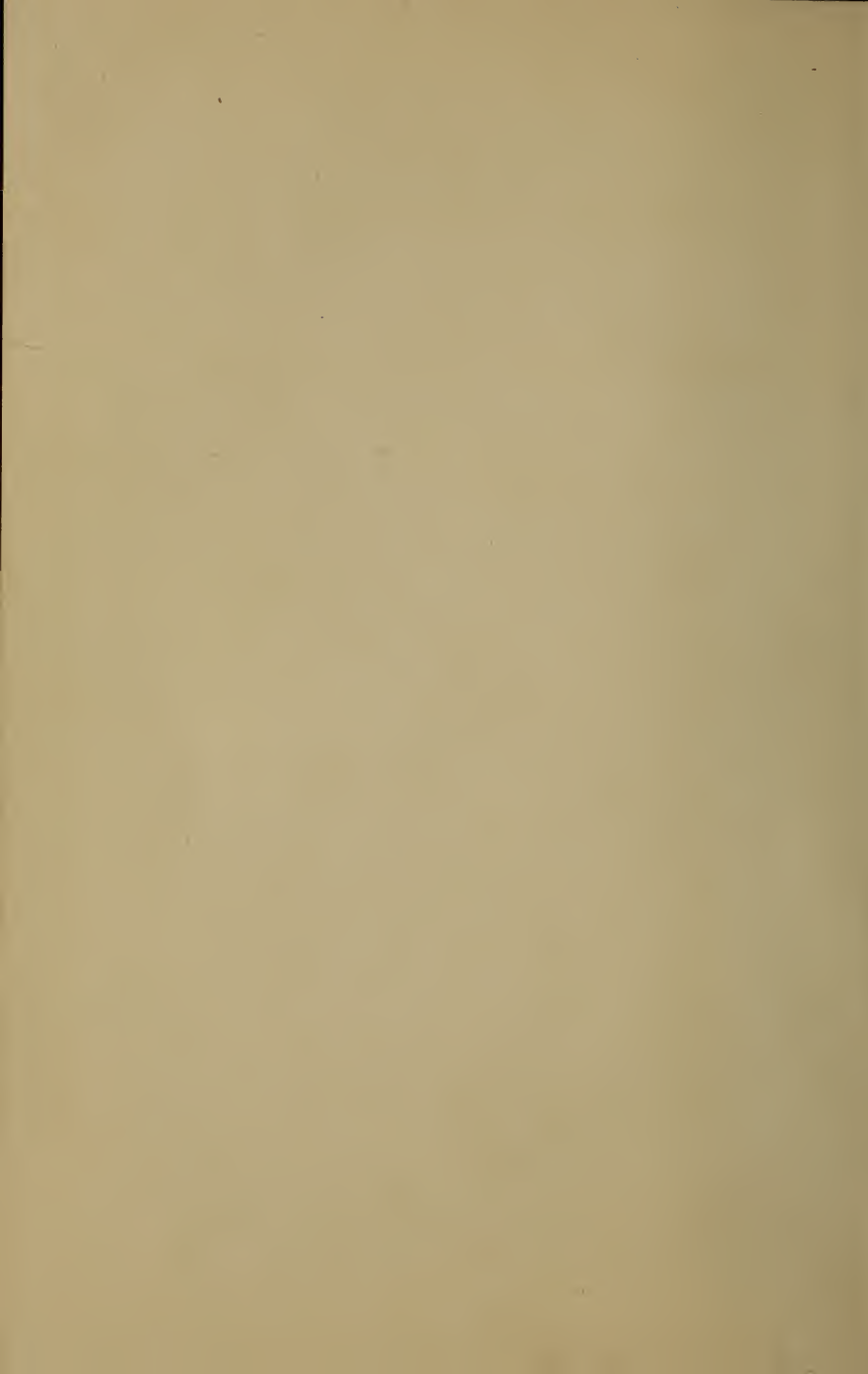
Class BV 825

Book D4

Copyright N^o _____

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT





THE IDEAL OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

BY
SELDEN P. DELANY

DEAN OF ALL SAINTS' CATHEDRAL
MILWAUKEE



MILWAUKEE
THE YOUNG CHURCHMAN CO.
1909

BV825
.I4

LIBRARY of CONGRESS	
Two Copies Received	
MAR 8 1909	
Copyright Entry	
Feb. 26, 1909	
CLASS	XXc No.
232033	
COPY d.	

Copyright by
THE YOUNG CHURCHMAN CO

1909

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.—THE REASON FOR CHRISTIAN	
Worship - - - - -	1
II.—THE CHIEF ACT OF CHRISTIAN	
Worship - - - - -	13
III.—THE HOLY EUCHARIST, OR MORN-	
ING PRAYER? - - - - -	23
IV.—HOW TO TAKE PART IN EUCHA-	
RISTIC WORSHIP - - - - -	35
V.—THE CEREMONIAL OF EUCHARISTIC	
Worship - - - - -	49



I

The Reason for Christian Worship



THE REASON FOR CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

AT first thought it may seem strange that God should command us to worship Him. It suggests an attribute in His character resembling pride or conceit. How can He desire the praise of men, and at the same time warn us not to seek the praise of men? Is He not asking of us a kind of character quite the opposite of god-like? Then, too, we remember that the Son of God, during His life on earth, was meek and lowly, and usually avoided the praise of men. Those whom He healed He charged to tell no man about it; He fled away when they tried to make Him a king; He impressed upon His

followers the necessity of being humble and poor in spirit. Why then should God desire our worship?

We may be quite certain that God does not desire our worship to add to His joy, or to augment His glory and greatness. Nothing we could do would increase His substantial bliss and glory. No, God demands worship from us, His creatures, not for His good but for our good. Let us then consider how it may be for our good to join regularly in the public worship of Almighty God.

It is good for us to worship God because it keeps Him always before us, always in our thoughts. It reminds us of His holiness, His love, His justice, of the moral requirements He has revealed to us, and of the day when we must all stand before Him to give an account of our lives. To have such truths brought forcibly home to us week after week, cannot fail to exert the most stimulating influence on our daily living. In the long run the sincere worshipper of God is sure to develop a different

kind of character from that of the man who gives himself wholly to a life of business and pleasure, without ever thinking of his Creator, and without ever facing seriously the great issues of life and death.

Again, it is good for us to worship God, because it brings us together as His children, as brothers and sisters in His world-wide family. If a man were to go off alone and worship God at some hermit's shrine, he would miss one of the greatest benefits of worship as God has ordained it, namely, the assembling of ourselves together. Who could doubt that many of our social evils would be quickly cured, if all sorts and conditions of our citizens could kneel side by side, Sunday after Sunday, not by sects and social classes, but as brethren in the Catholic Church? If the social nature of our common worship were more emphasized to-day, we would treat one another a little more like children of a common Father, and less like competitors in a cruel race, where the devil always takes the hindmost.

Finally, it is for our good to worship God because that is the only motive that can long bring men together and hold them together, to bear witness to the truth. If people are taught to go to church merely to hear a sermon, to pray, and to sing some hymns, they cannot be blamed for reasoning that they can do these things quite as well at home. At any rate they can read a better sermon at home than they can hear at church. It is because of this sort of teaching that in many of the strongholds of Protestantism thousands have fallen away into a vague religion of individualism, the chief tenets of which are belief in a lenient God and a general intention to live a good life. If Christians in large numbers should ever cease to assemble together for the worship of God, Christianity as a power for righteousness would soon sink to zero. Anyone who does wilfully let a Sunday go by without going to church, unconsciously, perhaps, but none the less really, is striking a blow at Christianity, and taking his share in the attempt to drive it from the earth.

But where, as a matter of fact, has God ever commanded us to worship Him? Of course we know that He required worship of the Jews, that He revealed to them various ceremonial duties connected with worship, and established a priesthood and a sacrificial system centering in the Temple at Jerusalem. We know also that it was our Lord's custom to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath day. But what has all that got to do with us Christians? Did our Lord ever command His followers to join in the public worship of God? Do the apostles have anything to say about such an obligation; and do we find them practising any kind of a common Christian worship? Or are we simply following antiquated Jewish traditions, connected in some obscure way with the Sabbath and the Fourth Commandment?

This is a most important question; for if it cannot be shown that our Lord ever enjoined upon us the duty of common worship, then those who neglect the worship of the Church have a great deal to say for

themselves. It cannot be of universal Christian obligation to worship God, if Christ never said anything about it.

The most casual reading of the Gospels will prove to anyone that our Lord did give an explicit command to perform a public act of worship. He gave it at the most solemn moment of His earthly ministry, on the night in which He was betrayed, as if He were making His last will and testament. He took bread and brake it and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take, eat, this is My Body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Likewise, after supper, He took the cup and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of this; for this is My Blood of the new testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins. Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of Me." Here was an explicit command to perform a definite action: not to meditate upon Him; not to read about Him in the Gospel; not to listen to someone talking about Him; but to do that thing that He was doing then, to perform that rite.

“Do this for My memorial”—the command comes to all of us across the intervening centuries; comes with an added force because in all ages and in all countries the great bulk of the followers of Christ have obeyed His command, gathering at His altars every Sunday in the year.

All Christians would doubtless be ready to admit this obligation to celebrate the Lord's Supper in obedience to His command. But perhaps there are some who do not see how this can be taken as a command to join in the public worship of God. It was a command to worship, because it was a command to perform a sacrificial rite. As St. Paul says: “As often as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till He come.” And by showing forth the Lord's death, we are showing forth, to God and to angels and to men, the meritorious Sacrifice of our Redeemer. From the beginning of the world the essence of worship has always been some form of sacrifice. Among the heathen nations of antiquity, and among the Jews, it

was the sacrifice of animal victims, and of the fruits of the earth; but among Christians it has always been the Sacrifice of the Cross, the Lamb of God slain once for all for the sins of the world, but repeatedly offered as an unbloody Sacrifice on the altars of the Christian Church. In the words of the Catechism in the Book of Common Prayer, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was ordained for the continual remembrance of the Sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby.

Our Lord then instituted this great act of sacrificial worship, and commanded His followers to perform the act as His memorial until His coming again. But it is not recorded that He told us how often to join in this act of worship. He left that detail to the custody of His Church, to which He gave His own divine authority, when He said to the apostles, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." What less could the Church do than observe every Sunday, the weekly festival of the Resur-

rection, by offering the Memorial He had commanded her to offer? That the Church did this from the earliest times is suggested by the statement in the Acts of the Apostles that the faithful were wont to meet together on the first day of the week for "the breaking of bread." This inference is confirmed by the facts of subsequent history. The early Christians would never have dreamed of letting the Lord's Day go by without taking their part in the Lord's service. Wherever we fail to do that to-day, and substitute for the Lord's service an office intended primarily for the clergy and monks and nuns, we have fallen away from the historic ideal of Christian worship.

II

The Chief Act of Christian Worship

II.

THE CHIEF ACT OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

WORSHIP may be rendered either to a divine or a human person. In either case the essential thing in worship is the offering of gifts or sacrifices to a person we love and respect. The inward feeling of love and respect is not enough; we must manifest that love and respect through the outward, visible action of presenting a gift. The action, however, is of the same general nature whether we offer sacrifices to a divine being or gifts to a human being.

Therefore it may help us to get to the heart of the subject by considering first the kinds of gifts we might give to our fellow human beings. Sometimes we present gifts to people to show how much we admire and

respect them, even though we may not know them personally; some one in public life might appeal to us, and we might send him a gift in praise of his character or achievements. At other times we might present a person with a gift as an acknowledgment of our gratitude for what he has done for us; perhaps he has saved our lives or protected us from insult. Then again, we may have offended some one we love very much; so we send him a gift by way of reparation, to show our sorrow for the offence, and to make up in some degree for the suffering or dishonor we may have caused. We might call these three kinds of gifts, gifts of praise, thanksgiving, and propitiation.

These three kinds of gifts correspond to the three kinds of sacrifice it is our bounden duty to offer to God: the sacrifice of praise, the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and the sacrifice of propitiation. God is the infinite, all-holy Creator, and we are His sinful creatures; therefore it is meet and right that we should worship Him in all these three ways. We should show forth His praise by offer-

ing sacrifice in keeping with His majesty and great glory; we should offer to Him thanksgiving through sacrifices that cost something, and that point to Him as the Author of all good; we should offer Him a sacrifice of propitiation that will adequately atone for all our sins and satisfy the justice of God. This, and no less than this, is the kind of worship that is due and fitting from sinful children to their heavenly Father.

The obligation is appalling. We are utterly powerless to offer any such worship as our common sense tells us we must offer to God. How can we sufficiently praise God for what He is? How can we adequately thank Him for all the innumerable benefits He has bestowed upon us? How, above all, can we ever offer Him anything that will repair the insults we have hurled at His infinite Holiness by our sins? Not with the utmost of human skill could we do it; nor with the art of the greatest masters; nor with earth's most heavenly music; nor with the gold of all the mountains in America! Without the help of our merciful God, we

are powerless to worship Him as we ought.

But, in His mercy, God has helped us. He has sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the new Head of our race, by His life of perfect sacrifice, crowned by His sacrificial death upon the Cross, has offered the worship that God demands from humanity. Sacrifices and meat-offerings were not sufficient. God required the oblation of the human will. Therefore our Lord came to do the Father's will; and by His sinless life He offered to the Father the highest praise and thanksgiving; and by His death upon the Cross He immolated Himself as a Victim for the sins of the world.

Not merely during His earthly life did our Lord offer to God this perfect worship. He has continually been offering this worship ever since in the midst of His Church. In the words of the Psalmist, "In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." He offers this perfect worship of praise

and thanksgiving and propitiation to-day through the service He has instituted, the memorial He has commanded us to make, the Holy Eucharist.

Thus He, our elder Brother, is standing in the midst of the Catholic Church to-day, surrounded by us His brethren, leading in the worship of redeemed humanity. He is our great High Priest; His earthly priests are merely His instruments through which He acts. They speak for Him. They say, "This is My Body," not "This is His Body." He, too, is the Victim: the Sacrifice we offer to our God. He is our Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; and His death, which we show forth before men and the Father, is the propitiatory sacrifice which we offer for our sins. This is all plainly and beautifully expressed in the words of our Prayer of Consecration in the Book of Common Prayer: "And we earnestly desire Thy fatherly goodness, mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; most humbly beseeching Thee to grant that, by the merits and death of Thy Son Jesus

Christ, and through faith in His Blood, we, and all Thy whole Church, may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His Passion.”

The Eucharist, then is the Lord's service—the kind of worship, and the only kind of worship, our Lord has commanded us to offer. It has indeed been the appointed form of worship in the Christian Church from the earliest times. Not until the sixteenth century did people ever dream of substituting for this divine mechanism of the Eucharist various man-made forms of worship. Furthermore, if we may accept the Apocalypse of St. John as a revelation of conditions in the world beyond the perception of our senses, we must believe that the underlying realities of Eucharistic worship form also the worship of the redeemed in the courts of heaven.

The Eucharist is not merely a service—a form of words: it is a great action. It comes as near as anything could, within convenient limits of time, to being a dramatic reproduction of the life and death of our

Lord. It is almost like a miracle-play. Thus the great drama of Calvary is everywhere being re-enacted on the altars of the Church; and the great mystery of our redemption is set forth before the faithful, Sunday after Sunday. It is set forth in a form that is within the comprehension of the simplest and most child-like. Thus the Eucharist is admirably suited to be the worship of the common people everywhere in Christendom.

The suitableness of the Eucharist for popular worship is well brought out in a passage in "God and Our Soldiers," by the Rev. Paul Bull, chaplain to General French's Cavalry in the late war in South Africa. He thus describes their Communion at sea:

"Here, at the altar, as we offered the Holy Sacrifice, we knew that we drew near to the living centre of all things; the past and the future, our memories and our hopes, our dear ones praying for us at home, our poor comrades waiting for us in Africa, the souls of those who had passed away, the

saints who were watching our conflict and aiding us by their prayers, the sick and the wounded, the dying and the dead, our sins and our sorrows—all these were gathered up in that one supreme act of communion, by which God accepts us in the Beloved, and blends our life with His, ‘that He may dwell in us, and we in Him.’ Words fail me to describe the majesty of that supreme moment when barriers of time and space fade away, as God rends the heavens and comes down, and through the uplifted gates and the everlasting doors the King of Glory comes to the soul that awaits Him. And as I moved round that little band of faithful soldiers, awaiting the loving-kindness of the Lord in the midst of His vast temple of sea and sky, I often had to touch them on the forehead in order to awaken them from the trance in which the intensity of spiritual joy had enwrapped them.”

III

The Holy Eucharist, or Morning Prayer?

III.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST, OR MORNING PRAYER?

IF Christ was, as we believe, the incarnate Son of God, the divine Teacher, then He could not have so bungled the work of establishing His Church that it could go wrong immediately after He ascended into heaven. He had promised that He would send the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, to guide the Church into all truth and bring to their remembrance all things He had said unto them. We may naturally infer, therefore, that when the whole Church in Apostolic and subsequent ages agreed on certain doctrines and practices, those doctrines and practices must have had the sanction of our Lord and of the Holy Spirit. If this is not

a true principle, it is hard to see how we may ever have any certainty in matters of Christian faith and practice.

If, then, we wish to satisfy ourselves as to what is the ideal form of Christian worship, we cannot do better than study history and see what type of worship prevailed in the earliest Christian communities, immediately following the era of the New Testament. Perhaps the earliest community of this kind of which we have any record was the community pictured for us in the newly discovered document, "The Teaching of the Apostles," which was probably written towards the close of the first century. In chapter 14 we find the following description of their worship: "On the Lord's own day gather yourselves together and break bread and give thanks, first confessing your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure. And let no man, having his dispute with his fellow, join in your assembly until they have been reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be defiled; for this sacrifice it is that was spoken of by the Lord: 'In every place and

at every time offer Me a pure sacrifice; for I am a great King, saith the Lord, and My Name is wonderful among the nations.' "

This passage shows plainly that the Eucharist was the regular Sunday service for worship, and that it was regarded as a sacrifice.

This would count for little if it were the only reference to such a state of things. What do we find from a comparison of all the writers of that early age of Christian history? Let us take as our guide Professor Harnack, the chief authority of our day on early Christian literature. Surely he could not be accused of having a bias toward anything Catholic. In the first volume of his *History of Dogma*, on p. 210, he states his conclusions as follows:

"As regards the Lord's Supper, the most important point is that its celebration (at the close of the first century) became more and more the central point, not only for the worship of the Church, but for its very life as a Church. The form of this celebration, the common meal, made it appear to be a fitting expression of the brotherly unity of the community. The prayers which it included presented themselves as vehicles for bringing before God, in thanksgiving and intercession, everything that affected the community; and the presentation of the elements for

the holy ordinance was naturally extended to the offering of gifts for the poor brethren, who in this way received them from the hand of God Himself. In all these respects, however, the holy ordinance appeared as a sacrifice of the community, and indeed, as it was also named Eucharist, a sacrifice of thanksgiving."

He adds in a note:

"The idea of the whole transaction as a sacrifice is plainly found in the *Didache* (*Teaching of the Apostles*), in Ignatius, and above all, in Justin. But even Clement of Rome presupposes it, when he draws a parallel between Bishops and deacons and priests and Levites of the Old Testament, describing as the chief function of the former to offer sacrificial gifts."

I might add that St. Ignatius calls the thank-offering the "Flesh of Christ," and St. Justin sees in the bread the actual Flesh of Christ, though he does not connect it with the idea of sacrifice. It would repay anyone to read all that Harnack says on this important subject. There is no space to quote more in this chapter.

The Holy Eucharist, then, in the early Church was regarded as the Christian sacrifice, the chief act of Christian worship. It continued to be the customary service for Sunday worship throughout Christendom

until the age of the Reformation. The Reformers attempted to improve on the Lord's service by substituting for it various services of their own making.

This is not true, however, of the Reformers in the Church of England. If we may judge from the results of their work in the Book of Common Prayer, they continued to regard the Eucharist as the chief act of Sunday worship, at which all the people would be present. This is still the intention of both the English and American Prayer Books. It is only in the celebration of the Eucharist that they give any direction for the preaching of a sermon, and only in that service is it ordered that the notices of fast days and feast days and the banns of matrimony be read to the people. This implies that the Eucharist is the service at which the whole congregation is expected to be present.

It is most extraordinary that Matins or Morning Prayer should have so generally usurped the place of the Eucharist in the churches of the Anglican Communion. The

years of possession by her Puritan foes have left on the Church no greater blemish. The mind of man could hardly have devised a service more unsuited for general parish worship than our office of Morning Prayer. Made up of the old Breviary offices of Matins, Prime, and Lauds, it was mainly intended to simplify the recitation of the office for the clergy and religious, and the most pious of the lay folk. It was the Puritan invaders who foisted it upon the people as their chief act of Sunday worship.

Indeed it takes one of a decidedly religious temperament, an expert in spiritual things, to enter into the office of Matins and appreciate its exalted spiritual message. The lessons are mostly too long, and they are surely incomprehensible even to our modern congregations of the ultra-respectable. The canticles of the *Te Deum* and the *Benedicite* are wearisome and meaningless to all but the most devout. There is no action, no emotion, no climax of heavenly vision—nothing but monotony and sol-

emnity and calm, expressed in beautiful but archaic English.

Let me quote some words from an English member of Parliament, Mr. C. F. G. Masterman, who, in a recent volume of striking essays called *In Peril of Change*, has this to say of the unsuitableness of the office of Matins for public worship:

“I have no hesitation in saying that, for the majority of the poor, to-day’s services are as incomprehensible as if still performed in the Latin tongue. The central service of the Roman Catholic Church, indeed, with its dramatic and appealing character, is far more intelligible even to the humblest worshipper. The Reformation changes provided the essentials of the Mass in the English Communion service, a service for dignity and beauty quite unparalleled. The monkish matins were never intended for formal parade one day in the week, swollen by elaborate music into intolerable dimension. Anyone concerned with the religious life of the poor will welcome most heartily the increased honor paid to the feast of the Lord’s Supper in recent years, and the progress towards its restoration to the central position of the Sunday worship. Such a change alone would, I believe, remove one of the chief obstacles to church attendance.”

The Eucharist is undeniably the service for popular worship. The common people love it; children behold with wonder, realizing that some great action is going on; the

outsider, the unconverted, the sinner, feel there some tremendous power drawing them towards God. If we only had more faith, and used the Eucharist more in our Sunday worship, the conversion of the multitudes would not be such a slow process. Our Lord said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." In the Eucharist that prediction is wondrously fulfilled. There His death on the Cross is set forth before God and angels and men. Therein is embodied the attractive power of the Cross, the strongest power for the conversion of sinners this world has ever known. How dare we neglect it so, and yet claim to be obedient followers of the Crucified? We have drifted a long way from St. Paul's conviction, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

Furthermore, because God whom we worship is infinite, utterly beyond our shallow comprehension, shrouded in mystery, the true form of worship must contain a large element of mystery. That is just what

Matins does not contain. It is all in the book, spread out before you, in rational forms of prayer and praise. There is no "beyond" in such worship. But in the Eucharist there is a great core of mystery, in the ineffable Presence of Christ. Around this our feeble words play in a vain effort to express the inexpressible, to materialize spiritual realities.

If I may add a note from my experience as a parish priest, I will say that never have I come so near losing my faith as when I have finished leading a Sunday morning congregation through Morning Prayer and Litany as their chief act of worship for the day; and never have I felt so near to God and so convinced of the truth of our religion, as when I have come down from the altar, after having led the Lord's people in the worship of the Lord's service on the Lord's Day. I believe that is the experience of all priests who have come to perceive the truth of the Real Presence and the Eucharistic Sacrifice. They have felt the most miserable when they have substituted a monastic

office for God's appointed worship for the day; and they have been most happy when they have taken the Lord at His word, and have pleaded the great Sacrifice, in harmony with the best traditions of the Church in all ages of her history.

IV

How to Take Part in Eucharistic Worship

IV.

HOW TO TAKE PART IN EUCHARISTIC WORSHIP.

IF the Holy Eucharist is the chief act of Christian worship, then it follows that it should be celebrated in every parish at an hour when the majority of the congregation come together for their Sunday worship. This hour in most parishes to-day would be half-past ten or eleven o'clock on Sunday morning.

Perhaps an earlier hour would be more desirable, say half-past eight or nine o'clock; then people could easily come fasting, and the bulk of the congregation could receive Communion. But this hour is impracticable because of our present social habits. Under present conditions the best plan seems to be to have an early Eucharist

for communicants, and a late Eucharist at which only a few, who can fast till then and prefer to do so, can make their Communion.

I say the ideal would be to have but one public Eucharist on Sunday morning, at which most of the congregation would receive Communion. That is plainly the aim of our liturgy, as it is the ideal in all parts of the Catholic Church. Even the Council of Trent said it was desirable that there should be communicants at all masses. Our liturgy contains phrases that apply primarily to those who have just received or are about to receive Holy Communion. Such are the "Ye who do truly," the General Confession, the Prayer of Humble Access, some expressions in the Prayer of Consecration, and the Prayer of Thanksgiving.

Some people have felt that they could not use such phrases sincerely unless they were to receive Communion at that particular service. Accordingly they have considered it the proper thing, when not intending to receive, to stay away from the service en-

tirely, or at least to leave the church immediately after the sermon. Yet this does not seem quite respectful to our Lord. It is like turning our backs upon Him. Could there be any objection to our remaining to enjoy the presence of our Lord, even if we are not to receive Him sacramentally at that time? We may either pass over without noticing those portions of the service intended only for communicants; or we may join in them in preparation for the next time we are to receive, and in thanksgiving for the last time we received Communion.

Are we not apt to be a bit selfish in the way we use the Lord's service of the Eucharist? Surely we are if we think of it only as the means whereby we receive our spiritual food. For that is only one aspect of the Eucharist. To be sure, it is a spiritual feast; but it is also a spiritual sacrifice. That on which it is celebrated is called the altar, for there the Christian sacrifice of the Body and Blood of the Lamb is offered to the Father. Thus it is a great deal more

than the Lord's Table, where we partake of the spiritual feast He has spread for us.

We should, therefore, not come to this service merely to get our spiritual food from God; but we should also come to give something to God: the sacrificial worship He has commanded us to offer Him. That it is our duty to offer such worship is plainly taught by these words in the Prayer of Consecration: "Although we are unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto Thee any sacrifice; yet we beseech Thee to accept this our bounden duty and service."

The faithful Christian, then, who cares to obey His Lord's command to do this in remembrance of Him, ought never to allow a Sunday to go by without being present at the Lord's service, the Holy Eucharist. By all means let us receive Communion if possible; but in any case let us be present to join in the offering of the great Sacrifice. We can assist in that offering by being present, by making the responses, and by making an act of spiritual communion.

To be present at the Eucharist every Sunday has, from the earliest times, been an obligation binding on all able-bodied Christians. To fail in that obligation was to fail to keep Sunday holy. It has been the constant Christian tradition, having the force of law, that Sunday is to be observed not merely as a day of rest, but primarily as a day of worship. And it has universally been felt, until very recent times, that the kind of worship we should offer is the worship our Lord, on the night He was betrayed, commanded us to offer.

This being the case, let us now try to see how we can join in this Eucharistic worship. In other words, what must we do, when present at the service, to make it our act of worship?

There are four kinds of sacrifice which we offer to God in the Eucharist. They are the sacrifice of praise, the sacrifice of thanksgiving, the sacrifice of propitiation, and the sacrifice of impetration.

By the sacrifice of praise we glorify God for what He is. With our finite minds and

feeble praises we cannot begin to honor God as His majesty deserves; so we offer Him the Body and Blood of Christ. Christ Himself is the Sacrifice of praise we offer to the Father. Only in Him, in the perfect surrender of His will, has human nature ever offered to God the praise which is due from humanity to its Creator. In union with that perfect sacrifice of Christ, we too may offer "ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice" unto God.

As we offer this our sacrifice of praise, we should renew the consecration of our lives to God's holy will, and meditate how we can offer ourselves to Him more fully and unreservedly. We should ask, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

By the sacrifice of thanksgiving we thank God for all His blessings to us and to His Church. In thanksgiving, as in praise, we are feeble and short-sighted; we do not realize all that God has done for us; nor can we thank Him adequately for all His goodness. But in the Eucharist we can offer

Christ Himself as our sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Father. He alone can thank God sufficiently, as He did throughout His earthly life. This indeed must be one of the primary functions of the Eucharist; for the word *Eucharist* means *thanksgiving*.

How much more fruitful our lives would be, and how many more blessings we should receive from God, if we made a greater use of the Eucharist as our sacrifice of thanksgiving! The absence of thanksgiving is one of the greatest shortcomings in our religion to-day. Perhaps that is why so much of our religion is gloomy and forbidding, and so few faces reveal the possession of any abiding spiritual joy.

It would be found a most helpful practice to assist at the Eucharist now and then without asking anything from God; but instead to pour forth a stream of thanksgivings for God's blessings upon the Church, the nation, the home, our friends and kindred, and ourselves. Let us not forget to thank Him also for our misfortunes, sorrows, failures, and disappointments; for in

that way we can turn them into blessings. By using the Eucharist often in this way, we open the windows of the soul and let in God's light; we grow in faith and hope and love; and we rise from our knees more joyful, and with quickened courage for the battles of life.

When we say that in the Eucharist there is offered up a propitiatory sacrifice for the quick and the dead, we do not mean that each celebration has an independent propitiatory character of its own; but rather that in the Eucharist we apply the merits of the death of Christ, who was "the propitiation for our sins." Accordingly we pray, "Most humbly beseeching Thee to grant that, by the merits and death of Thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in His Blood, we, and all Thy whole Church, may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His passion."

This does not mean that we can obtain forgiveness of mortal sins by being present at the Eucharist, or by receiving Holy Communion. We can obtain forgiveness only

by a true repentance. If we are not truly penitent when we come to receive that holy sacrament, we "eat and drink damnation" to ourselves, because we do not "discern the Lord's Body."

It does mean, however, that by being present at the Eucharist we can gain forgiveness of venial sins, and also the grace to repent of mortal sins. The offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice also helps us to pay the temporal penalty for any mortal sins we have committed; for that temporal debt remains even after we have received forgiveness. It is the teaching of many fathers of the Church that this temporal debt for sin may be cancelled by our good works, by the prayers of the Church, and especially by the offering of the Holy Sacrifice. The temporal debt for our sins must be paid in some way, either here or in the intermediate state. It rests largely with us to say whether it will be paid by our sickness, or loss, or physical pain; or by our good works, and by being present often at the Eucharist.

Finally, we may offer the Eucharist as

a sacrifice of impetration or prayer. It is the most efficacious way of asking God for what we need for body or soul, for others or ourselves. It means infinitely more than if we were to hold up a crucifix toward heaven and say, "Not for my sake, nor for anything I have done; but for His merits, for all that He has suffered to atone for my sins, grant me this request!"

We generally end our prayers with the words, "through Jesus Christ our Lord." That is, we offer our requests to the Father through Him. But in the Eucharist we do this in act. We send up our prayers to the Father through and in union with Him whom we offer as our Sacrifice, Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is for this reason that the Prayer for the Church Militant, which can be made to cover almost everything we can pray for, is set in the very heart of our liturgy. Therefore, if we wish to ask any favor from the good God, we can ask it in no better way than by praying during the Eucharist that

we may receive it as among the “other benefits of His passion.”

“Look, Father, look on His anointed face;
And only look on us as found in Him.”

V

The Ceremonial of Eucharistic
Worship

V.

THE CEREMONIAL OF EUCHARISTIC WORSHIP.

THE question of ceremonial is a subordinate question. The important thing is to restore the Eucharist to its rightful place in our worship, "according to the commandments of God and as this Church hath received the same." Any parish wherein the Eucharist is the chief service every Sunday morning is moving in the right direction, whether the altar be brilliant with lights and tapestries, the priest vested in a colored silk chasuble and attended by acolytes clad in red and white, and all dimly visible through clouds of incense; or the altar be void of ornaments, and the priest ministering unattended, vested in a long surplice and black stole.

Much harm has been done to the Church because many High Churchmen in the past failed to realize that the Lord's service plain was a consummation more devoutly to be wished for than the man-made service of Matins, rendered with all the accompaniments of an elaborate ceremonial.

The question may sometimes be asked, Why need we have any ceremonial at all? It might be said in reply that it would be difficult to get along without any ceremonial unless we return to a state of nature. The Eucharist must be celebrated somewhere: is it better that it should be on a slab of rock under the open sky than under the protection of a roof and on an altar made as beautiful as possible? The priest must wear something as he ministers at the altar: is it better that he wear a checked business suit or a black Prince Albert coat than the traditional vestments sanctioned by centuries of sacred use at the altars of the Church?

But why have the particular kind of ceremonial that is commonly used as an accompaniment of the Eucharist, such as

lights, colored vestments, genuflections, acolytes, and so forth? It is important to get clearly in our minds the true answer to this question. Answers are often given that are somewhat beside the mark. For example, it is said we have them because they appeal to the aesthetic sense; or because they are aids to devotion; or because they symbolize some underlying spiritual truth, as when it is said altar lights are used because they symbolize the presence of Christ, the Light of the world.

Now these are only partial reasons for employing ceremonial in a Christian Church. It would never be right to allow the private aesthetic or devotional needs of the rector or of some influential parishioner to determine what ceremonial should be employed in the worship of the Church. The only proper justification for adopting a particular ceremonial in Christian worship is that such ceremonial is enjoined by the traditional practice of the whole Catholic Church. It is our duty to follow

the customs of the Church; not to consult our own private tastes.

In like manner a gentleman conforms to the customary manners of his time and class, instead of inventing manners of his own. For instance, when making a call he leaves a calling card of conventional size, and not a huge placard on which his name is emblazoned in large gilt letters.

Yet, when we have accepted this principle of using the ceremonial that has come down by tradition from the earliest times, we may well go further and ask how this particular ceremonial happened to grow up around the Eucharist.

We find the whole matter is comparatively simple. There is one key that unlocks the mystery; one fact that explains all the ceremonial that has grown up through the centuries around the offering of the Holy Sacrifice. That fact is the presence of the Body and Blood of our Lord under the sacred species of bread and wine. That fact renders all the ceremonial so simple that a child can understand its meaning and its

reasonableness. On the other hand, to one who has not grasped the truth of the Real Presence, the Eucharistic ceremonial must seem a strange conglomeration of sights and sounds signifying nothing.

Let us see how this explanation works out.

Christ is present in the sacrament. Therefore the sanctuary should be made glorious. The best that the world's art can produce should be there offered in His honor. The musician pays his tribute through the organ and the human voice; the painter, through sacred pictures on walls and tapestries; the sculptor and the wood-carver, through graven figures and delicate tracery on screen, altar, and reredos; the worker in glass, through the soft colors of translucent mosaic; and the architect, through mullion, arch, and column. All these and more may offer their choicest treasures to the King of kings and Lord of lords on His altar-throne. We make the sanctuary the most beautiful part of the church, not because it is the part the congre-

gation must look at, but because it is the part of the church which our Lord honors with the presence of His sacred Humanity.

Christ is present in the sacrament. Therefore the altar and its ornaments should be the best that we can afford. The fairest of linen, the rarest of silk brocades, candlesticks of the best brass or even of more precious metal, chalice and paten of gold or silver—all these we should use in His honor, with the most splendid altar our money can buy. Moreover it is fitting that we should make the altar as glorious and beautiful as we can with lights and flowers. It is in accord with the instinct that teaches us to decorate our table at home with flowers and candles, and our most precious silver and china, when we entertain a distinguished guest or one whom we greatly love.

Christ is present in the sacrament. Therefore the priest who is the celebrant should wear no common garb, but vestments of special sacredness and value, as befitting the great function he is performing. The Eucharistic vestments, the amice, alb, gir-

dle, stole, maniple, and chasuble, come down to us from the primitive days of the Church. They are probably fashioned after the garments worn by our Lord in His daily life—all except the chasuble; and the chasuble is said to represent the seamless robe worn by Christ when He went to be crucified.

If this be so, it seems especially appropriate that the priest wear such vestments when he officiates at the altar: for there he speaks and acts as the mouthpiece and instrument of the great High Priest, who is the unseen Celebrant at every Eucharist.

In any case, whatever be the origin of the Eucharistic vestments, they are sanctioned by centuries of holy use; and the Church, being conservative, does not change her fashions with the fluctuating styles of human society, but clings to the old ways and the old dress of Apostolic times.

Christ is present in the sacrament. Therefore the people kneel reverently in the presence of the "holy gifts," and when they go to the altar rail to receive communion. The Puritans in England realized that

kneeling to receive the Blessed Sacrament implied belief in the Real Presence. They did all in their power to get the rubric in the Prayer Book changed, so that the people could receive the sacrament in a sitting posture; but the authorities could not be persuaded to make the change, and the rubric still stands.

In the same way, the presence of Christ in the sacrament explains the genuflections of the celebrant. He bends the knee in adoration of his Lord, whenever he changes his attitude toward the sacred Presence, as by turning to the people and back again, or by uncovering and covering the chalice with the pall or veil. It explains also the genuflections of the acolytes.

Finally the ceremonial use of incense derives its meaning from the presence of Christ in the Sacrament. Because He is present in our midst, our worship is the pleading of His merits before the Father. Incense typifies the merits of Christ. Like the clouds of incense smoke, they cover our imperfections, purify our offering of our-

selves, and ascend before God as a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savor. Likewise when persons or things are censed during the service, this is to symbolize the truth that the merits of Christ must be applied to us one by one before we can be made clean and acceptable to God.

Thus all the ceremonial connected with the Eucharist becomes intelligible and reasonable in the light of the presence of Christ under the sacred species of bread and wine. Without that presence it would be a vain show and a hollow mockery.

But not all of our parishes use this ceremonial. Not all of our clergy and people believe that its use is justifiable. We are often told it is lawless to observe such ceremonies in the Anglican Communion. It is alleged that it was the intention of the Reformation and the Prayer Book to abolish this ceremonial, and return to the simplicity of the Gospel.

We who use this ceremonial believe that a fair and unprejudiced study of the English Reformation and of the development of

the Book of Common Prayer will convince any one that such assertions are very far from the truth. The final Reformation settlement under Elizabeth provided that the Church's worship and the administration of the sacraments should be carried on as they were before the Reformation, except in so far as the Prayer Book contained explicit directions to the contrary.

The compilers of the Prayer Book did not intend it should be a parson's handbook, with full directions for rites and ceremonies. This is proved by the fact that the bulk of the clergy continued to celebrate the Eucharist as they had done before the reign of Edward VI. That is, they followed the ceremonial directions of the old Sarum Missal, making only the few slight changes prescribed in the new liturgy authorized by the Elizabethan Bishops. Another proof is furnished by the insertion of the Ornaments Rubric under Elizabeth. This rubric directed that the ornaments of the Church and the ministers thereof, at all times of their ministration, should be retained and be in

use, as they were in the Church of England, by the authority of Parliament, in the second year of the reign of King Edward VI.

That rubric not only makes lawful, but authorizes the use of the various points of Eucharistic ceremonial above mentioned. If there are lawless clergy and parishes in the Anglican Communion to-day, they are surely not to be found among those who use the ceremonial directed by the Ornaments Rubric of the English Prayer Book.

Because of the Puritan occupation of the Church of England in the seventeenth century, the Ornaments Rubric was very widely disregarded. But it was never repealed. It was even re-enacted and made stronger in 1660; and in that form it is still the law in the Church of England. The fact that so many churches in England and America to-day still cling to Puritan fashions in worship is simply evidence that we are still in the thrall of the Puritan occupation. Happily, as the years go on, we are gradually getting free and recovering our splendid Catholic heritage.

Those who use the Eucharistic ceremonial above described are sometimes taunted with being but a small and insignificant party in the Church. But surely that shoe belongs on the other foot. Those who do not use that ceremonial are in the minority: they are carrying on their worship in a provincial mode, such as never was on land or sea until within the last two or three centuries in one corner of Christendom. For fifteen centuries after Christ there were no Christians in the world who worshipped the Almighty through a service like our Morning Prayer, apart from the altar, and in bare and gloomy churches.

Those who worship God through the Divine service of the Eucharist, with full Catholic ceremonial, are rather to be numbered with the great majority of Christians in all times and places. They are with three-fifths of all the Christians in the world to-day; they are with the whole Catholic Church of the first fifteen centuries; they are, in all essential respects, with the Apostles breaking bread from house to house;

and they are with the great company of the redeemed worshipping the Lamb before the Throne of God.

MAR 8 1909

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Sept. 2005

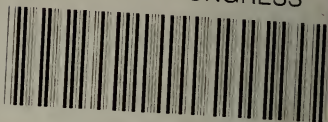
Preservation Technologies

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

BV
825

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 665 440 A